

## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 237

By Hood

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Ray Carroll Thomas for his many accomplishments as a coach.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize those outstanding coaches who have performed their duties with uncommon devotion and enthusiasm and have brought honor to this State; and

WHEREAS, one such esteemed citizen and football coach is Ray Carroll Thomas, who on March 28, 2007, will be honored by his former players for his rich influence on their lives; and

WHEREAS, Ray Thomas graduated from Rhea County High School in 1956, received his Bachelor's degree from Tennessee Technological University (TTU) in 1960, and received his Master's degree in Administration and Supervision from Austin Peay State University (APSU) in 1963; and

WHEREAS, a gifted athlete himself in his high school days and collegiate career, Mr. Thomas was an All-OVC selection on TTU's 1960 OVC Championship football team; he also played professional football for the St. Louis Cardinals in 1960; and

WHEREAS, after coaching high school football in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1961-62, Mr. Thomas began a ten-year coaching association with APSU, where he coached the offensive and defensive lines, in 1963; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to accolades, Coach Thomas and his myriad of athletic achievements were recognized in 1982, when he was inducted into the TTU Sports Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, under Coach Thomas's exceptional guidance, many players have gone on to great things; one of his players, Bonnie Sloan, went on to become the National Football League's first deaf player; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Thomas is also accomplished in areas besides football; he served professionally for over thirty years with State Farm Insurance Company, beginning in 1973 as an Agent, then serving as an Agency Manager, and returning to work part-time with the company even after he retired in 2004; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Thomas served as Executive Director of the National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors in 2005-06; and

WHEREAS, throughout his diverse and remarkable career, Coach Thomas has exemplified the impeccable character and stalwart determination that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, Ray Thomas's character and commitment are also demonstrated in his devotion to his wife, Ernestine Parker Thomas; daughters, RaeAnne and Kristy; and granddaughter; and

WHEREAS, those who know Coach Ray Thomas best describe him as a coach who was a friend to the players off of the field, and a true leader for them on the field; and

WHEREAS, Ray Carroll Thomas has carried out his duties with the utmost acumen, alacrity, diligence, and character, and he has earned the respect and admiration of his players, his colleagues, and the citizens of this State; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor and commend Ray Carroll Thomas for his many accomplishments as a football coach and for his honorable and astute service to this State, extending to him our best wishes for much continued success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.